

224 THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

in *his* arms, a sailor sprawled over a table, and by the painted bar that ran across one complete side stood two haggard women me eking an old man who was brushing the sleeves of his coat with an expression of disgust. "He thinks he's got red ants on him!" laughed one of them, as Dorian passed by. The mar; looked at her in terror and began to whimper.

At the end of the room there was a little staircase, leading to a darkened chamber. As Dorian hurried up its three rickety steps, the heavy odour of opium met him. He heaved a deep breath, and his nostrils quivered with pleasure. When he entered, a young man with smooth yellow hair, who was bending over a lamp, lighting a long thin pipe, looked up at him, and nodded in a hesitating manner.

"You here, Adrian?" muttered Dorian. "Where else should I be?" he answered, listlessly. "None of the chaps will speak to me now."

"I thought you had left England," "Darlington is not going to do anything. My

brother paid the bill at last. George doesn't speak to me either. I don't care," he added, with a sigh. "As long as one has this stuff, one doesn't want friends. I think I have had too many friends."

Dorian winced, and looked round at the grotesque things that lay in such fantastic postures on the ragged mattresses. The twisted limbs, the gaping mouths, the staring lustreless eyes, fascinated him. He knew in what strange heavens they were suffering, and what dull hells were teaching them the secret of some new joy. They were better off than he was. He was prisoned in thought. Memory, like a horrible malady, was eating his soul away. From time to time he seemed to see the eyes of Basil Hall ward looking at him. Yet he felt he could not stay. The presence of Adrian Singleton troubled him. He wanted to be where no one would know who he was. He wanted to escape from himself.

"I am going on to the other place," he said, after a pause.

"On the wharf?"

"Yes."

"That mad-cat is sure to be there. They won't have her in this place now."

Dorian shrugged his shoulders. "I am sick of women who love one. Women who hate one are much more interesting.

Besides, the stuff is better."
14 "Much the same."